REMARKS

Claims 1, 7, 12 and 19 have been amended, and claims 1-22 are pending. No new matter has been added.

It is believed that the above amendments place the application in form for allowance, or at a minimum place the case in better form for appeal. Thus, the applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments and favorable reconsideration of the application.

The sections set forth below are presented in the same order as that of the Action for ease of reference.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 1-6, 8-18 and 20-22 were rejected for allegedly being anticipated by Watson et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,912,666 ("Watson").

Independent claim 1 has been amended to make it clear that the method concerns automatically dismissing option information that appears on a screen as a computer user is working. The method includes displaying a workspace on a computer screen, displaying at least one icon, and presenting a non-modal dialog box within the workspace when a predetermined icon is chosen. Claim 1 has also been amended to make it clear that the technique includes "providing a preference option that, when enabled by a user, hides the non-modal dialog box when a cursor moves off a frame of the dialog box to maximize the amount of available workspace on the computer screen for displaying work". Thus, the present technique includes automatic dismissal of the non-modal dialog box when the user moves her cursor off of the frame Thus, the non-modal dialog box disappears when the cursor moves off its frame. Independent claim 12 has been amended in a similar manner to recite a computer program that operates to hide a non-modal dialog box when a cursor is moved outside the boundaries of the non-modal dialog box, to maximize the amount of available workspace on the computer screen for displaying work. Support for such amendments can be found, for example, on page 10, lines 12-19 of the application, and no new matter has been added.

These amendments to claims 1 and 12 are necessary to particularly point out that the automatic dismissal to hide the non-modal dialogue box maximizes the amount of available workspace for a user to continue working on the screen. No new issues have been raised by their introduction into the claims. Such amendments were not earlier presented because applicant's attorney believed that the claims were clear, but after reading the Examiner's

comments in the final Action it became apparent that such amendments are necessary to distinctly claim the invention and to distinguish it from the cited art. Accordingly, the amendments should be entered for the purpose of placing the case in form for allowance, and thus the applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments.

The present invention permits a user to continue work without the need to click on any command boxes or to perform any special key combinations to dismiss the non-modal dialog box from the workspace. As now claimed, such operation maximizes the amount of computer screen real estate space available to display work. It also minimizes use of the computer mouse or other input device Importantly, this feature permits more time to be devoted to actually working on the drawing project rather than spending time on calling up, moving and/or dismissing dialog boxes (See application, page 4, lines 3-10).

The cited Watson patent discloses an object-oriented global cursor tool. The method includes management of multiple tasks at the same time, and a cross application tool server to allow any cursor tool and any application to function together (see col. 1, lines 41-46). The cited Fig. 8 of Watson illustrates a desktop with various frames In Fig. 8 a user has two documents open, wherein one document 800 is active, and the other document 810 is inactive. Both documents have two frames, one "PinkDraw" frame and one "Text" frame as shown, and the user is choosing tools from PinkDraw's command panel 830 (see Watson, col.10, line 63 to col. 11, line 1). Both the "Active" and "Inactive" documents remain on the screen, and thus are blocking the workspace. The Watson patent does not teach to hide a non-modal dialog box when a cursor moves off a frame of the dialog box to maximize the available workspace on the computer screen. Such operation is required by independent claims 1 and 12. Since such operation is absent in the system of Watson, the applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 12 are not anticipated

It is noted that on page 3 of the Final Action, reference has been made to "pull-down" menus. But it is noted that a conventional pull-down menu remains open when the cursor is moved off of its frame The user must click the left mouse button or perform some other key function in order to dismiss the pull-down menu. Thus, the applicants respectfully assert that Watson does not anticipate the pending claims.

In view of the above remarks, the applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejections of independent claims 1 and 12. In addition, claims 2-6, 8-11, 13-18 and 20-22 all directly or indirectly depend on either claim 1 or claim 12, and thus should also be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Dependent claims 7 and 19 were rejected for allegedly being unpatentable over Watson in view of Screen Dumps of Microsoft Word 2000 ("MS Word").

Claims 7 and 19 have been amended to make it clear that the same key combination that restores the non-modal dialog box can be used to hide the non-modal dialog box. Support for this cosmetic change can be found, for example, on page 9, line 30 to page 10, line 4 of the application. No new matter has been added These amendments are necessary to particluarly claim this aspect of the invention, and were not earlier presented as it was believed that the claims were clear. No new issues are raised by their introduction into these claims. Thus, the applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments to claims 7 and 19.

The MS Word screen dump was cited as showing that a key combination can be used to shrink a dialog box, and repeating the key combination restores it. It appears from the figure that multiple documents have been opened, but there is no suggestion or teaching of how such operations were performed But even if the same key combination has been used, there is no suggestion or teaching to use the same key combination to open and to hide a dialog box. Furthermore, there is no suggestion or teaching to automatically hide a non-modal dialogue box to maximize the amount of available workspace on the computer screen for displaying work. Thus, the MS Word reference does nothing to correct this deficiency of Watson. Consequently, neither Watson or the MS Word reference, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests to use the same key combination to restore and to hide a dialogue box. Thus, claims 7 and 19 are patentably distinct thereover.

Furthermore, the Watson and MS Word references do not suggest or teach the method of claim 1 or the computer program of claim 12. Thus, claims 1 and 12 are patentably distinct thereover. Since claims 7 and 19 indirectly depend upon independent claims 1 and 12, which are patentably distinct over the cited art, then these claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 1 and 12.

In view of the above remarks, the applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejections of claims 7 and 19.

No fee is believed to be due for this amendment, but if there is a fee deficiency please charge Winston & Strawn Deposit Account No. 501-814.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of all of the pending claims of the application

Respectfully submitted,

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